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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the experience of one school in southern Ohio in implmenting an interdisciplinary pilot program during the 1993-94 school year. The Connections program at Cedar City High School was designed to encompass the content areas of English, science, and social studies. The program derived its name from its interdisciplinary goals of designing instruction so that student would come to understand the interrelatedness, or connections, between subject area. The program served a heterogeneous ninth-grade cohort, including students with learning disabilities. Data were obtained through observation; document analysis; and interviews with teachers, the principal, and the assistant superintendent. Bolman and Deal's (1991) four frames of organizational analysis--structural, human resources, political, and symbolic--were used to examine the relationships between and among frames. Faced with uncertainty, the Connections teachers initially relied strongly on creating a separate Connections culture through rituals and symbols. However, the two worlds could not be totally separated; differences in structure, scheduling and grading, and resource allocation were sources of conflict. Within the program's teaching team, the structures and symbols created by the teachers supported collaborative opportunities. In the final analysis, teacher orientation (their value dispositions) proved the most important in sustaining collegial community. (LMI)

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MAKING "CONNECTIONS": A FRAMES ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INNOVATIVE PILOT PROGRAM

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The current wave of education reform challenges the traditional patterns of school organization. Initiatives such as inclusion and interdisciplinary curricula rely on the ability of implementing teachers to collaborate as a collegial community. Models for reform innovations propose creating opportunities for interaction among educators. While such arrangements foster increased teacher interaction, they are critiqued as most often generating only a surface collaboration that Hargreaves (1991) labels "contrived collegiality." Yet such collaborative structures are inherent in what Little (1990) views as one of two fundamental conditions necessary to true collegiality: opportunity. The other necessary condition for collegiality is interdependence.

Research points to the dynamic, unpredictable nature of the change process as most often incremental, fragmented, and context-bound (Odden, 1991; Fullan, 1993). In most schools and districts, many partially implemented innovations and pilot programs operate at any given time (Joyce, Wolf, & Calhoun, 1993). Moreover, within the local context of change, multiple and sometimes competing or conflicting organizational environments exist and so complicate the implementation process (Little & McLaughlin, 1993). How implementors resolve such competition and conflict influences the outcomes of innovations.

This study examines the experience of one school in southern Ohio, Cedar City High School, in implementing "Connections" during the 1993-1994 school year.[1] Connections was an innovative pilot program designed to encompass the content areas of English, science, and social studies. A voluntary program option, Connections was conceived as serving a heterogeneous ninth grade cohort, including students identified as having learning disabilities.

The four implementing teachers represented each of the three content areas and special education.

In studying the Connections program throughout its initial implementation year, the following research question served as the focus: To what extent were the Connections teachers able to create and sustain a teaching team that represents a collegial community? To address this overarching question, this study considered two subsidiary questions:

1. How did the Connections teaching team at Cedar City High School organize to implement the Connections program?

2. How did the larger Cedar City school and district organizations influence the Connections program's implementation?

Data Collection and Analysis

This study followed a qualitative case study research design (Merriam, 1988), employing data gathering and analysis techniques characteristic of qualitative research. Data sources included: (1) observations -- of the teachers' planning and training sessions prior to the start of the school year, meetings of teachers with the principal and/or assistant superintendent, parent information meetings, and twice-weekly observations of both the teachers' common planning period and the three-period Connections block of classes throughout the year; (2) interviews -- with teachers at the conclusion of each instructional unit and with the principal and assistant superintendent preceding and following the school year and at the end of each quarter; and (3) documents -- including internal communications, district community newsletters, and relevant local newspaper articles.

The Connections program derived its name from its interdisciplinary

goal of designing instruction so that students would come to understand the interrelatedness, or connections, between subject areas. Connections also involved multiple relationships, or connections --- between and among teachers, students, parents, administrators, and the surrounding organizational systems. Any analysis of these connections, therefore, requires a conceptual framework that accounts for their dynamic interaction. Bolman and Deal's (1991) integration of four frames of organizational analysis --- structural, human resources, political, and symbolic --- offers such a perspective.

Bolman and Deal's theory posits that each frame would afford a perspective that might shed light on "a different slice of life" (p. 309) within the Connections experience. Accordingly, in turn, this paper will review the structural, human resources, political, and symbolic dimensions of both the emerging Connections organization and the larger school and district organizations. But as the Connections experience will illustrate, and as Bolman and Deal (1991) recognized, each perspective is neither complete nor isolated. Consequently, the relationships between and among frames, will also be explored in this paper. As Bolman and Deal also point out, "For different times and different situations, one perspective may be more important than others" (p. 325). Therefore, Connections' context --- its people and setting --- must be considered first.

Connections' Context

Cedar City and Its Schools. Located within commuting distance of three urban areas, Cedar City and the surrounding township served by the Cedar City Schools is a postcard prototype of small towns of the American heartland. Cedar City's location and Norman Rockwell-ian atmosphere have contributed

to the population growth and economic expansion the community has experienced beginning in the 1960s. Cedar City Schools mirror this community growth. A sustained pattern of growth in student enrollment led to two building projects as well as to the Board of Education's decision to seek passage of an operating levy during the Connections year.

Cedar City Schools, and the high school that is the setting for this study, mirror not only the city's growth, but its character as well. Cedar City High School (CCHS) exhibits a decor common to most high schools. But distinctive touches are present as well. A grouping of four chairs upholstered in a semblance of maroon, one of the school colors, is arranged to create a lobby of sorts at the main entrance. Benches have been placed at intervals along the central corridor, and students often cluster there before school or between classes. It is a pleasant and clean atmosphere --- no graffiti-covered walls, no signs of inattention to maintenance --- that bespeaks the character of its inhabitants. It is an environment that is comfortable for the 750 overwhelmingly white, middle class students and their 44 teachers.

Cedar City students and teachers experienced several changes in administrative personnel in the three years prior to Connections' implementation. In 1990, Martin Young assumed the superintendency; the next year brought Mike Davis to Cedar City as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; and 1992 saw several changes in building leadership, including a new high school principal, George Cerny. Under this new leadership, the district initiated several changes. One of the changes was Connections.

Initial interest in developing Connections came about through a visit

Davis and Cerny made to observe a similar program in the Columbus area. The local newspaper quoted Cerny's description of the events that would lead to Connection's adoption:

> We were so impressed that we sent up three of the school's department heads who, afterwards, turned out to be equally as enthusiastic . . . At this point it's just a matter of presenting the benefits of the class to the board, selecting the teachers to teach the class, and discussing it with parents.[2]

Cerny's forecast was accurate. As the three department heads talked with their colleagues, several teachers became interested. Guided by the interested teachers' areas of certification and experience with the ninth grade curriculum, the advice of department chairs, and his first year experience observing the teaching and interaction of his staff, Cerny chose the Connections teaching team. They will be introduced next.

The Connections Teaching Team. The four Connections teachers were: Sheryl Hart, English; Bernie Lyons, Social Studies; Tim Schwartz, Learning Disabilities; and Dan Centers, Physical Science.

With 25 years in the district, Sheryl Hart is the veteran teacher of the group. She has taught Art as well as English, and has worked in all five buildings in the district.[3] Prior to coming to the high school three years ago, Sheryl had been part of a close-knit group of teachers at the junior high. Family is a theme that surfaced often with Sheryl. Conversations with Sheryl often centered around her family, and homey touches --- including a smiling picture of her three-year-old granddaughter --- distinguish Sheryl's desk area. As part of the Connections teaching team, the importance of family to Sheryl would also be evident.

Bernie Lyons joined Connections with 15 years of teaching experience,

nine of them at Cedar City High School. During the Connections year, one edition of the monthly district newsletter featured Bernie in its regular staff profile column. The article described Bernie's background, including his master's degree in gifted education, and his family. But the article began with this portrait:

> You know, he's one of those teachers that students say can be very demanding but they really like his class anyway. He's one that lives and breathes his subject --- history.

Bernie's love of history is a constant, as is his love of coaching. But the Connections year would also bring changes in his life. In addition to joining Connections, Bernie teamed with the English department chair to teach the American History portion of an American Studies dyad. October brought two other dramatic changes: the family move to a new house and the death of Bernie's mother. Both of these influences, Bernie's view of his teaching area and the changes he experienced, could be expected to affect Connections.

Tim Schwartz came to Connections with 15 years of teaching experience, the last eight within the Cedar City system. Most of his teaching experience, and all of his years at Cedar City, has been as a learning disabilities teacher. But like Sheryl, Tim also has a background in art education. Also like Sheryl, he taught at the junior high before coming to the high school five years ago. Tim's involvement in the life of Cedar City and its schools runs deep. His wife teaches fifth grade for Cedar City Schools. Tim serves as an elected building representative for the local teachers association. He is an assistant basketball coach. This year Tim would also share a life experience with Bernie: Tim's father died in October. All of these aspects of Tim's life and work would shape his Connections experience, but none moreso than his status as a learning disabilities teacher.

Dan Centers worked for ten years in industry before coming to Cedar City High School to teach physical science and physics in 1990. Currently, he is enrolled in a master's degree program in educational technology at a nearby university. Some aspects of Dan's life and work that shaped his Connections year were readily apparent: his extra-curricular school roles and his interest and work with technology. Dan's role as senior class advisor claimed many a morning before classes began. With the myriad of details involved in this role, Dan's conscientious approach to organization came to the fore. Dan also took his membership on both the district's Instructional Council and Instructional Technology Committee seriously. More reticent, quiet, and private than his Connections teammates, the influences of Dan's life beyond school were more difficult to detect. Dan did not often talk about his family. Yet when Bernie's mother was dying, Dan spoke privately with Bernie.

> I told [Bernie] of my experience, so he could share. I said, "You know I went through that myself. At least in my case and yours, you have time to say I love you and come to terms." (Interview, September 10, 1993)

Before Connections, ties among the four teachers had been limited. Tim and Sheryl were acquainted with each other during their junior high days, and Tim and Bernie shared the acquaintance that came of both being coaches. But acquaintance appeared to be the extent of the team's pre-Connections ties. As Sheryl commented,

> Tim, I sort of knew; Bernie was a "hello;" Dan, well, English and science people don't get much chance to know each other.

Sheryl's observation foreshadows a significant structure characteristic of Cedar City High School. So it is appropriate to choose the structural frame to begin this paper's frames analysis.

The Structural Frame

Through the lens of a structural perspective, the architecture of an organization can be seen. Rules, roles, and relationships assume a design, and an organization's effectiveness depends on whether that design is appropriate and adequate to meeting the organization's established goals. The twin elements of design, differentiation and coordination, are affected by such structural imperatives as the organization's size, technology, environment, goals, and work force (Bolman & Deal, 1991). For Cedar City High School (CCHS) and Connections, some of these structural imperatives were held in common; others were not. So it follows that CCHS structures and Connections structures would be both the same and different. How these structures would coexist might well be expected to affect the extent to which Connections teachers would create and sustain a collegial community.

When visitors came to observe Connections and asked about elements essential to successful implementation, the teachers would invariably echo Tim's thought, "The key is flexibility." Conceived and implemented as a program option, Connections implicitly represented flexibility. The Cedar City High School Vision Statement (adopted in 1993) declared the school's commitment:

> We will implement course structures . . . such as the Connections Program . . . In addition to forging links between academic disciplines, our goal is to develop inquiring, responsive minds.

Importantly, organizational structures in place at CCHS and those devised by the Connections teaching team would both be necessary to support such a goal.

In order for Connections to meet its goal of inter-disciplinary study, teachers from three academic disciplines and special education would need

to integrate the established curricula for English 9, Physical Science, and World History. This would not prove to be an easy task. Perhaps the single most visible structure at CCHS is apparent in the configuration of corridors by curricular departments. Each subject area has distinct geographic boundaries. Reinforcing geographic propinquity, the structure of department chairs bolstered subject departments as the unit of professional community at Cedar City High School. Communication among departments was limited. The common structure of subject departments in high schools and its implications for teachers' sense of identity and patterns of professional community has been well-noted in the literature.[4] CCHS department structures retained an abiding presence in Connections. The Connections teachers, in a nod to the departmental structure at CCHS, chose to rotate in the role of "chair." Each Connections teacher retained his or her room within the CCHS geography by department. So forming a collegial community would require the creation of new ties of identity and professional community among the Connections teachers. To facilitate the process, the structures of summer planning meetings and a common planning period were instituted.

In the course of the summer meetings the teachers decided that a unit structure would provide flexibility in their approach to curriculum content. During the first semester, units of study were driven by the chronology of history. Thus, in the unit "Beginnings," Bernie focused on the development of civilizations, Sheryl focused on mythology and The Odyssey, and Dan focused on the elements of the scientific method and measurement in particular. But as the weeks went by, it became increasingly clear that the existing science curriculum did not integrate easily into a chronological approach. The unit structure would need to be modified if Connections' interdisciplinary

goal was to be supported. So over the Christmas break, the teachers met and made the decision to "go with thematics," with science concepts, rather than chronology, as the source. Consequently, the second semester began with "Structures." Sheryl's instruction centered on grammatical structures, Bernie's on the "isms" (nationalism, imperialism, colonialism), and Dan's on atomic structures and elements.

Flexibility would also be important as the teachers addressed Connections' heterogeneous student cohort. Like all Cedar City High School students, Connections students entered the high school with the track designation of honors, academic, or general. Normally, under this tracking structure, ninth grade general students would not be enrolled in Physical Science; that was the freshman province of academic and honors students. Consequently, Dan's past experience teaching Physical Science had been primarily with academic or honors students. Nor would freshmen normally enroll in World History. In addition, the tracking structure at CCHS provided for separate sections and differentiated curricula within English 9 based on tracks. Clearly, Connections flexibility would require alternative structures.

As the full Connections cohort gathered on the first day of school, the first item of business after introductions was the announcement of student advisory groups. Over the hours of planning sessions over the summer, the teachers had arrived at the structure of advisory groups as a way to meet their goal of ensuring success for all Connections students. The theory was that randomly assigning students to groups of 20 per teacher would be a student grouping alternative to tracking that would be consistent with Connections' heterogeneous purposes. In practice, Connections' structures

for student grouping could not totally resist the influence of CCHS tracking structures. Student advisory groups were not formed totally at random; all learning disabilities students became part of Tim's group. Moreover, as Sheryl explained to a group of visiting teachers, CCHS tracking distinctions could not be totally ignored in the area of English. After all, "honors" Connections students would receive weighted grades in the area of English. The differentiation between tracks that had begun in junior high was acutely evident in the area of student background in grammar. So during the time that grammar was the English focus, tracking groups became the basis for forming student groups.

Another significant area of flexibility lay in the structure of scheduling. Within the seven-period high school schedule, Connections was allocated a three-period instructional block (second through fourth periods) and a common planning period (first period). There would be times when the entire Connections cohort met for the full block --- often to work on or present student projects. At other times students would be placed in two groups of two advisory groups each for a more complex $1\frac{1}{2}$-$1\frac{1}{2}$ period configuration balanced among the three subject areas over a period of three days. This arrangement allowed for lengthy science labs or dramatic historical simulations. When the students were asked for their input at the end of the first semester, they overwhelmingly indicated a strong preference for these alternative schedule options. Perhaps, as Bernie surmised, "They know we can't lecture for three periods." Yet more often than not, the students in Tim's advisory group were parceled out among the three other groups students and a "regular three-class rotation" was followed. After all, CCHS structures meant Connections student report cards would

indicate separate grades for the each of three content areas encompassed in Connections.

As the education reform movement with its frequent emphasis on restructuring would indicate, the structural perspective on Connections' implementation is significant. From a structural perspective, the departmental and tracking framework that characterize Cedar City High School's organizational architecture appeared to work at cross-purposes with the interdisciplinary and heterogeneous nature of the Connections program. Long before the current wave of reform, Seymour Sarason (1971) observed

> The existing structure of a setting . . . defines the permissible ways in which goals and problems will be approached . . . The existing [structure] is a barrier to recognition and experimentation with alternative ones. (p. 12)

The Connections experience would suggest that CCHS structures, while not excluding the Connections experiment, did raise partial barriers to many Connections structures. Considering Little's twin conditions for collegiality, the opportunity afforded by Connections' structures (especially as they coexisted with and were influenced by CCHS structures) could not be expected to produce a collegial community in and of themselves. Perhaps, as Bolman and Deal might postulate, the discrepancies between CCHS structures and Connections structures may be traced to differing structural imperatives. With its relatively small size, its innovative purposes and goals, and its particular teaching team, Connections would and should develop unique organizational structures. Yet other structural imperatives were held in common: CCHS and Connections share an environment and a core technology. Reconciling structural imperatives that were both alike and different may not be as linear a process as the structural frame might suggest. The

relationship between Cedar City High School and Connections is far more complex than their structures alone. The perspectives of other frames are needed.

The Human Resources Frame

The human resources perspective focuses on the "fit" between individuals and the organization in a symbiotic relationship. If an organization is to be effective, the needs of its members must be met, and the gifts each member brings to the organization must be compatible with the organization's needs. Tacitly recognizing the importance of the human resources frame, administrators knew selecting the members of the teaching team would be of great consequence. As Mike Davis put it,

> It was critical . . . the teachers needed to be enthusiastic . . . Having teachers that parents would recognize as top-notch was important. (Interview, May 11, 1993)

Selecting teachers whose skills, abilities, needs, and orientations would be compatible with each other and with Connections' needs and goals would be a strong determinant of the extent to which collegial community developed.

Little and McLaughlin (1993) distinguish three dimensions of teachers' professional relations: intensity, inclusivity, and orientation. Examining each of these dimensions should provide insight into the human resources dynamics within Connections. Intensity refers to the strength of the ties among a group of teachers, especially in comparison to ties with other sources of identity and community. As the discussion of Connections' structures illustrated, at CCHS professional ties tended to center around departments. During Connections' implementation, several factors worked together to allow this traditional allegiance and affiliation to shift. The Connections

newsletter given to parents at a meeting the week before school started points to one factor: "We were chosen for this class on a strictly voluntary basis which gives Connections its best chance for success." Bernie's comment to a group of visiting administrators in May points to another factor:

> Over the summer, we got together maybe 40 to 50 hours. Maybe the biggest thing we go out of it was team building, 'cause we scrapped a lot of it.

Time that would allow teachers to forge ties was also part of the rationale behind Connections' additional common planning period. Yet the common planning period did not always work toward this purpose. One incident in November is indicative. I arrived early and found Dan at his computer. When I asked about plans the group had been working on between my visits, Dan replied, "I don't know. They were talking about it yesterday. I heard something about it." Increasingly, Dan would be present for common planning time (the teachers met in his room during first semester), but did not join the others sitting together at a table. Instead, he would be readying lab equipment for the day or be seated at his computer. Bernie's presence for the full planning period also became increasingly rare with the passage of time. Coaching duties and the work involved in the American Studies dyad appeared to provide strong competition for Bernie's time. Both Bernie and Dan seemed to be practicing what Hargreaves (1993) has called "strategic individualism" (p. 63). Their detachment can also be seen as related to Fiedler's (1984, 1987) contingency theory. As the perceived uncertainties of Connections' implementation eased, Dan and Bernie's patterns of behavior appeared to shift from being relationship-motivated to being task-motivated. Yet there were times when the common planning time was marked by the full involvement of all four teachers. These moments were often

related to crises, whether personal or professional. The days surrounding the deaths of Bernie's and Tim's parents, and the days before meetings of consequence (particularly those that threatened the program), for example, all served as the impetus for intense common planning period meetings. Shared trials and tribulations would intensify the ties among Connections' teachers.

The second dimension of professional relations, inclusivity, refers to membership boundaries. On more than one occasion, Assistant Superintendent Davis and Principal Cerny had told the Connections teachers, "This is your baby." Clearly, the teachers took this message to heart; they were reluctant to let "strangers" be involved in the care of their "child." The teaching team's relationship with Dan's second semester student teacher, Jim Pelfrey, illustrates. Just as second semester with its change in unit focus was beginning, Jim was unexpectedly assigned to Dan. So Jim joined the first period gatherings, but he was rarely included in the conversation. Jim's responses during an interview in late April reveal his perceptions of his relationship with the Connections team:

> I <u>still</u> don't feel part of the team. Like yesterday, they kind of asked me for an idea for the introduction to the futuristic unit, and when my response was not immediate, Dan and Sheryl immediately turned their attention away.

As the incident illustrates, the Connections team tended to be exclusive rather than inclusive. The informal roles within the teaching team, may have left no room for "outsiders" and so played a part in this exclusivity.

By temperament and expertise, Dan became the computer whiz of the Connections team. It was he who created class lists and forms. Attention to details was also part of Tim's role, but he also served as art consultant and, in Connections jargon, "lackey." By mid-September when I asked Tim

to characterize his role within the team, he was quick to say, "I see myself as the most flexible --- I can jump off and go wherever I'm needed. I'm used to that as an LD teacher." So it was that Tim would substitute for Bernie or Sheryl when they were ill; he would assist Bernie in organizing and running historical simulations or dramatizations; and he quite often took aside students who needed individual attention with English reading assignments. Sheryl was often the organizer of the group, telling her colleagues, "Hey, guys, we've gotta . . ." By gender and inclination, Sheryl also took on a motherly role. She brought home-baked goodies to share, handed tissues to those with colds, and inquired about families. Bernie was the "idea man" for the team. His participation in planning often began with "What if we . . .?" It was also Bernie who would often tie the conversation to broader issues, as when the teachers and administrators met in January to reflect on Connections at midyear. The discussion turned to the relative success of students from various tracks within Connections, and it took only a few minutes before Bernie observed, "It's the old philosophical question, isn't it? How do we meet individual needs?" Bernie's question provides a segue to the third dimension of professional relations: orientation.

Orientation refers to teachers' value dispositions: their conceptions of subject matter (fixed or malleable) and their conceptions of their students as learners (motivated, academically able). If Connections were to be true to its interdisciplinary goal, the teachers would need to uncover, rather than cover, their traditional and established curricula. Yet the teachers' autonomy in creating Connections' curriculum was not total. Since Connections was a pilot program option, students would need to be able to rejoin the traditional curriculum successfully in their sophomore year. So, expectations

inherent in the articulated Cedar City English and Science curricula (including the literary canon and exposure to key science concepts, for example) dictated many of the teachers' choices. As an elective, World History could be more flexible. But within these strictures, Connections teachers' conceptions of their disciplines would allow for varying degrees of adaptability in their approach to content.

Science proved to be the least adaptable. Natural ties between science and history and English were elusive. On those occasions when his colleagues bemoaned the seeming inability of science to "connect" with their disciplines, Dan would say, "I'm not a science historian." In one interview, Dan expanded on this comment:

> It's never been easy to connect academically. I wasn't taught that way. . . . I know it's me . . . I don't care about names and dates. I don't want it to be artificial, contrived, a surface connection. The kids see through that.

Dan's thoughts hint at two factors at work in the teachers' ability to adopt a malleable conception of their subject area. Their own learning experiences did not reflect an interdisciplinary view. Moreover, in the highly specialized world of high school teacher preparation and departmental structures, they were not familiar with each other's content. Sheryl and Bernie knew little about elements or Newton's laws; and Dan knew little about To Kill a Mockingbird or medieval history. Common planning period content sharing was limited --- mostly along the lines of "I'm going to be working on (force experiments, the Reformation, Act III of Romeo and Juliet)."

Orientation also bears directly on the well-documented relationship of dependency between teachers and students. Teachers rely on students for their sense of satisfaction and efficacy.[5] Given Connections' heterogeneous student cohort, the teachers' conceptions of student motivation and abilities

could be expected to powerfully affect this relationship. McLaughlin (1993) describes three general patterns in teachers' classroom responses to students. Teachers could maintain traditional standards and conventional practices; they could lower their expectations; or they could adapt their practices and pedagogy, broadening their definitions of achievement and creating active roles for students. Both the first and the last occurred in Connections. The first could be seen in "the lab book crisis." The main activity in Dan's science classes was lab work, Dan had very specific requirements for an appropriate lab book, and lab reports would not be graded until they were recorded in a lab book. A form of gridlock took shape as Dan's standards were not altered and many students had not secured "correct" lab books several weeks into the first quarter. Bernie and Tim attempted to break the gridlock, but were only partially successful. The incident would color the relationship between Dan and many of the Connections students.

The "lab book crisis" to the contrary, the third pattern, adapting practice and pedagogy, was most characteristic of Connections. In a clear departure from traditional CCHS classes, Connections' most visible pedagogical method was student projects. When students accompanied teachers on "recruiting trips" to present Connections to eighth-grade students, Amanda's remarks were typical:

> We do projects all the time. It's project after project . . . the Renaissance Fair . . . the Quests . . . the twentieth century time line . . . the final projects we're working on right now.

In fact, Connections' first day involved a group project. As students worked for two periods and then presented their work during Connections' third period, teacher comments could be overheard:

Sheryl (to Tim): That girl who's doing all the work ---

she's a general kid who almost didn't make it. I love it!
Bernie (to Sheryl): You gotta see some of these designs!
Tim (to Dan): Know what? Three of these are mine [LD]
and I didn't even know it. Look at them!

The tracking stereotypes that pervaded CCHS began to be broken on the first day. The first day's success allowed the process to continue. By the end of the year, when I asked each teachers to reflect on various aspects of their practice, a consensus emerged:

> The general kids performed above our expectations and their expectations. . . . They constantly amazed us. . . . Seeing the LD students rise to the occasion so often has been significant.

This uniform perception did not always mirror reality. Several students, all general or LD, "failed" science.

Ultimately, it was the dimension of orientation within the human resources frame that the produced a rift in the team. As frustrated as the teachers were by their inability to forge academic connections with science, the major stance that finally separated Dan from his colleagues was the three other teachers' conception that Connections was about ensuring student success. By the last weeks of school, in the minds of his colleagues, Dan's continued membership on the Connections team was in question.[6]

The Political Frame

The political perspective focuses on the relationship between coalitions and resources within an organization. At CCHS, coalitions were defined by departments and their competition would revolve around such resources as status, time, money, and space. As George Cerny told a group of visiting administrators, "We are fragmented." During the Connections year, concern for school climate was such that one focus of the school's ON-TASC (Ohio Network: Training and Assistance for Schools and Communities) three-year

grant has been on improving staff morale. Polarization by departments was especially evident in the intense jockeying for "old" science rooms when the new science wing was ready for occupancy at mid-year. Yet the year also brought at least a brief opportunity for coalescing across departments as teacher concerns rose about the potential effects of a community group known as Freedom 2000. Two candidates for the Board of Education appeared to be allied to this emerging group with ties to the religious right. The local teachers association sprang into action, sponsoring a "Meet the Candidates" forum and acting to recommend three candidates. Neither of the Freedom 2000 candidates was elected, and the threat passed. So, too, did staff unity.

In the spring the Board acted to place an operating levy on the May ballot and to make budget cuts. As resources became more scarce, the political relationship between Connections and other CCHS coalitions became more apparent.

A $10,000 grant assured Connections of abundant money resources. Teachers received a stipend for their summer planning sessions, and teachers' requisitions for instructional materials could be liberally granted. While other teachers' days would include a "duty" period, Connections teachers were given a second planning period in common. As George Cerny observed, "People sort of resented that a little bit, and rightly so." Part of the resentment may have stemmed from the status and publicity Connections received. So when Connections teachers approached the principal with the idea of allocating the old science rooms to Connections so they wouldn't be so scattered, Cerny had ambivalent feelings. He could see the practical validity of the teachers' request, but he feared that dedicating a wing to Connections and interdepartmental dyads and the status as a separate

"department" implied by such geography would "further isolate them. They need to keep a foot in the work of the rest of the building."

Just as a political perspective illuminates the relationship between Connections and CCHS, so also the political perspective sheds light on the relationship among the Connections teachers. From a political perspective, the Connections teachers can be seen as representatives of the coalitions at CCHS. Coming to Connections with affiliations with their departments, Connections teachers could be expected to embody the "enduring differences . . . in values, preferences, beliefs, information, and perceptions of reality" (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 186) of their respective coalitions. According to the political frame, conflict among the teachers over these enduring differences would be inevitable and would be resolved only as power would be exercised in a negotiation process.[7] Understanding who had power and how power was exerted, then, becomes important in the organization's approach to conflict, and concommitantly, community. Power takes on many forms: expertise, control of rewards, coercion, charisma. With his master's degree in gifted education, his tenured status, and his nine years at CCHS, Bernie clearly possessed the power of expertise. He also, as the district newsletter profile suggested, was charismatic. Only slightly less charismatic in the eyes of students, and with her 25 years of experience, Sheryl also held power within the Connections team. But both Sheryl and Bernie tended to avoid conflict, and while both held power, neither had authority. Early in the second semester Bernie, in an exercise of what might be termed cooperative power, engaged Dan in a discussion of alternative grading standards. While Dan nodded at much of what Bernie had to say, as the planning period ended, Dan asked, "How is this different from what I've been

doing all along?" Bernie and Sheryl spoke to administrators who, with the leverage of evaluation and considerable rewarding and coercive power, might have intervened. Yet to do so would remove considerable autonomy from the team, and both Davis and Cerny preferred that the teachers resolve any conflicts among themselves. In terms of power, a condition of stalemate prevailed.

Thus, the political perspective does offer a measure of understanding of the relationships among the Connections teachers, but does not appear to offer any insights that would advance collegial community among them.

The Symbolic Frame

The symbolic perspective posits that in the face of the uncertainties of organizational life, symbols help people find order and meaning in their experience. Certainly, the education enterprise is fraught with uncertainies.[8] As an innovative pilot program, Connections could be expected to pose even more uncertainty. Indeed, Sheryl told the Board of Education, "We were all apprehensive at first." Consequently, symbols --- in the form of rituals, ceremonies, myths, and sagas --- would be quite visible in Connections' implementation.

Each day at Cedar City High School began with a ritual. Promptly at 7:45, Frank Barton's voice would come over the public address system saying, "Good morning, and welcome to [Cedar City] High School." Pep assemblies, Homecoming activities, the junior-senior prom, and all the myriad of CCHS traditions attest to the symbolic aspects of life at CCHS. The power of symbols was also recognized in ON-TASC's approach to improving staff morale. One of the group's first actions was to convert one of the old science classrooms was into a teachers' lounge. As evident as the symbolic was in

the life of CCHS, it would be even more apparent in Connections.

Faced with the tasks of preparation, it is notable that the Connections teachers chose each other's homes as the sites for their summer meetings. Hospitality, and the associated ritual of breaking bread together, would be a hallmark of team-building in Connections. Each morning the aroma of coffee accompanied the common planning period meetings. Other rituals attended common planning time. A large white marker board served as the vehicle for planning each week's activities. Certain days were reserved for certain purposes. Thursdays were planning days, and Fridays were for "talking about kids."

The Connections classes bore their symbolic marks as well. During the first semester, the entire Connections cohort gathered together, ostensibly for attendance-taking. But the gathering promoted social solidarity among students as well. The structure of student advisory groups also had a symbolic dimension. Each group was given a color name, and all student work was expected to bear the student's name and color group affiliation. Sheryl's group was Blue, Tim's Red, and Dan's Green. Not content to christen his group with a primary color, Bernie chose Magenta. On the first day, as students presented their completed projects, another Connections tradition was born. Each presentation would be met with applause. The first day also gave birth to the first Connections story in the Connections saga.

Oft-repeated, the "phenomenon of the unheard bell" figured prominently in Connections lore. On that first day, as students were busily engaged in their task, the CCHS end-of-second-period bell sounded. No one, teachers or students, noticed! Other stories --- like one mother's tale of her LD son's rapt reading of Romeo and Juliet and his telling her, "This is so cool;

have you ever read it?" --- would assume their places in Connections' growing saga. Each story was a success story, validating Connections as a program and the teacher's work. And each story contributed to an emerging vision of what Connections was all about.

During the summer, the teachers developed a Connections vision statement. The statement's goals contained all of the by-words and buzz-words one would expect:

> Integrate the subject areas . . .
> Build on student interests and curiosity
> Accommodate the various learning styles
> Stress critical thinking skills
> Draw upon resources in the family, school, and community

Once created, it was a hollow symbol, never referred to again. As Fullan (1993) asserts, "Vision emerges from, more than it precedes, action. Shared vision, which is essential for success, must evolve" (p. 127). Visions are a process. The symbolic elements of ritual and symbol were part of that process for Connections.

Conclusions

The structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames overlap. Politics and structures at CCHS were mutually reinforcing, most notably for departments. Many of the structures Connections devised had symbolic value as well. Human resource orientations were often the by-product of teacher experience within the structures of CCHS. Politics limited options in structural change. Symbolic rewards and political rewards coexisted.

Faced with uncertainty, the Connections teachers initially relied strongly on creating a separate Connections culture through rituals and symbols. Since the Connections teachers worked both in the world of Connections and the world of Cedar City High School, the creation of

distinctive Connections symbols and structures appeared to be an attempt to compartmentalize their work. However, the two worlds could not be totally separated. Areas of conflict abounded. The CCHS structures of departments and tracking conflicted with Connections' interdisciplinary and heterogeneous nature. CCHS schedule and grading structures intruded. Connections' abundant resources conflicted with increasingly scarce resources for the school as a whole.

Within the Connections teaching team, the structures and symbols the teachers created supported collaborative opportunities. Many of the often-cited supports seen as necessary for collegiality (Little, 1990) --- administrative support, decision-making power and autonomy, common planning time, training and assistance during the summer, and material support --- were in place during Connections' implementation. Shining moments of collegiality occurred. Yet the collegial condition of interdependence proved chimeral. In the final analysis, the dimension of teacher orientation proved the most important to sustaining collegial community. Its importance became most clear at the end of the year. Time is necessary to collegial community. It is only through time that communication becomes open and honest and caring. It is only through time that trust becomes grounded in mutual professional respect. It is only through time that the courage to risk and confront differences develops. It is only through time that a shared vision can emerge. It is only through time that the initial commitment to <u>try</u> a program becomes a commitment <u>to</u> the program.

NOTES

[1] To respect confidentiality, "Cedar City" is a pseudonym. All administrators, teachers, and students named in this study also have been given pseudonyms.

[2] To respect confidentiality, the local newspaper source will not be given.

[3] The five buildings include three elementary schools for grades K-4, an intermediate (grades 5 & 6) and junior high (grades 7 & 8) housed in the same building, and the high school.

[4] See Johnson (1990), Little (1992), and McLaughlin (1993), for example.

[5] See McLaughlin (1993), Lieberman & Miller (1990), Pauly (1991), and Cohen (1988).

[6] Events during the following summer evidently resolved this difference sufficiently for Dan to remain with Connections as its second year began in August, 1994.

[7] For a discussion of the power and political dynamics of schools, see Blase (1991).

[8] For example, see Flinders (1988), Rosenholtz (1989), Jackson (1986), and Cohen (1988).

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